

Feedback from the Force Improves Training and Supports Change in 1st Armor Training Brigade

Commander
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In this issue, we focus on updating and improving training based on feedback we receive from invaluable sources in the field. If we are not responsive to the needs of the force, then we have failed the mission, and this is even more critical to an Army at war. Even though most of our cadre will contribute indirectly to the war by training soldiers, many of our soldiers will contribute directly to the fight and it is our mission to train them to this standard. Our premise is that our soldiers will deploy into a combat zone within 30 days of graduation, and it is our moral imperative to train them to survive and contribute to their unit.

Feedback Sources

Cadre and redeployed units. As professional soldiers and warriors, it is our duty to keep track of ongoing operations and assess how the contemporary operating environment (COE) impacts training. As part of this effort, we recently sent a team to Fort Stewart, Georgia, to gather information from the 3d Infantry Division. We also invited leaders from 3d Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment to Fort Knox to talk to our leaders and visit our training.

Cadre recently assigned from combat training units to the 1st Armored Training Brigade are a tremendous source of information and ideas on how to shape initial entry training (IET) to prepare soldiers for the COE. It is also of enormous benefit that the 1ATB brigade commander was on the ground for several months doing research to write the history of the war in Iraq.

Annual field survey. We conduct an annual field survey to gain empirical data and conduct trend analysis on training effectiveness. This year's survey is out, so please take some time to give us accurate feedback. Rest assured that we closely scrutinize the results and analyze how to best adjust training in accordance with your feedback. Another valuable source of information for this data set is the surveys we send to the basic noncommissioned officers course and the advanced noncommissioned officers course here at Fort Knox.



ARMOR Magazine. Of course, our most recent initiative to gather feedback is through this feature. Please continue to send comments to :

jose.pena@knox.army.mil

Responding to Feedback

Once we get feedback and assess necessary changes, there are several levels of coordination that must be completed before implementing changes:

- If the change involves basic training or a basic training core task in one station unit training (OSUT), we must have approval from Fort Benning, Georgia, before making any significant changes to the program of instruction (POI). For example, based on feedback from the force, we will add .50-caliber M2 heavy MG and Mk-19 to basic training and 63A/M OSUT, since most of these soldiers will use these crew served weapons in their first unit. The good news is that TRADOC is undergoing a fundamental analysis of basic training and we hope to report on some needed changes that will be resourced in the next issue.

- Changes to the 19D or 19K POI go through the Chief of Armor for approval. We brief the Chief on recommended changes, and those approved go forward to the Institutional Training Management Board (ITMB) for review on the impact on installation resources and tenant units. For example, in our upcoming ITMB, we are recommending adding combat pistol tasks to 19K OSUT, increased field time during OSUT, and adding more field and military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) training for tankers and scouts. If the Chief of Armor approves these concepts,

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the installation staff will determine the impact on resources and the ITMB will make a recommendation, but the Chief makes the final decision on whether to change the POI.

- POI changes to tactics, techniques, and procedures/conditions, or the order of training events are approved by brigade and battalion commanders. Some examples of recent innovations in the brigade to improve training include: discussing Warrior Ethos as well as Army Values training; less emphasis on drill and ceremony and more on tactical formations, culminating in a tactical exercise we call Warrior Challenge; consolidating the eight individual tactical training lessons into one integrated operation in a mission setting to drive the training; more training on improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance during our mine warfare classes; and transforming our entire training methodology toward more hands-on performance oriented competition and very little lecture-style instruction. We are also adding training on tactical questioning to develop and train the concept that every soldier is a warrior and a collector.

- According to the Armor School model, once a major POI change is approved by the Chief of Armor, or new courses will be taught, the Directorate of Training, Doctrine, and Combat Development (D/TDCD) develops the training plan for us to execute. D/TDCD is currently developing our POI for the Stryker and Mobile Gun System so we can train soldiers when the equipment and instructors are available.

Please continue to provide feedback so we can channel your ideas into the training development systems at TRADOC and Fort Knox. General Schoomaker's intent for the Army is to prepare every soldier to be a warrior. To address General Schoomaker's intent, TRADOC is currently reviewing many changes to the brigade combat team, which will impact OSUT, including a rapid fielding initiative (RFI) to provide initial entry soldiers with the same equipment they will use in their first unit. By next issue, we hope to report on some of these changes and look forward to responding to your feedback.